

# Industrial Management

By John Lawrence.

We hear a great deal about the conquest of political power as an event for which the workers must prepare. This is indeed an essential phase of the Revolution and cannot be too much emphasized. At the same time it must be remembered that the Revolution means the **taking over by the workers of the means of production.** This industrial procedure will be the backbone of the Social Revolution. The political act, the setting up of a workers' government or proletarian dictatorship, will be the means by which this industrial transformation will take place.

Taking over of the industries will proceed rapidly under the proletarian dictatorship, but the preparation for it must be begun now.

We see that the Italian workers have already taken over a large part of the industries of their country in anticipation of the political conquest or overthrow of the capitalist state which is being prepared for and will take place at any time.

**Both are necessary—the political Act and the industrial preparation.**

It is in the industrial field that most of the workers will be called upon to act.

## Shop Councils And Committees.

What can be done now?

Let the workers of every shop organize in a shop council and elect a shop committee. Let the council and committee not only instruct the workers in the economic and political facts of the Revolution, but also learn actually to manage the affairs of the shop, **with the aim in view of assuming entire control and ownership.**

It is very well to be revolutionary but it is also necessary for the worker to learn more about his job.

Under capitalism with its development of machinery the average worker knows very little about the processes of production in the industry in which he is engaged. His own task is probably some minute and repetitious action, which he goes through mechanically and paying no attention to anything else. The actual management of the shop and knowledge of the production which is being carried on there are vested in the foreman, or

technical director, or efficiency expert. This individual is a worker so highly paid and well treated that he no longer considers himself a member of the working class, but feels he belongs with the bosses.

If we only study the experience of the Russian Revolution we see that these technical men whose work is necessary to production side with the capitalists and sabotage the proletarian revolution.

In the early stage of the Russian Revolution the workers tried to do without the technical men, and lacking the knowledge of how to manage scientific production, they made a muddle of it. When the Communists seized the power they paid these experts high salaries to get their services—the only thing they could do.

## Preparing For Workers' Control.

This however is an extravagance and can be avoided by the workers learning now to supplant these managers from among their own numbers. This is difficult but it can be done.

Let the Shop Council take up such questions as these:

How are raw materials obtained? What quantity is needed? Does the shop use the best and latest type of machinery? What working hours will enable the workers to give best service? What is adequate compensation for each particular job? What can be done to stimulate production, encourage inventions, etc?

"What," you may ask, "are we to do all this for the boss's benefit?"

No! . . . . . in a few years, for your own.

The Shop Council is not only an effective means of the workers bettering their conditions now. In this it supplements the Labor Union, and unlike the latter, which in many cases is controlled by a conservative bureaucracy, it may be controlled directly by the workers since the Committee and officers will be chosen from their own number.

The Shop Council furthermore will be the nucleus of the new working class government which will take the place of the present one and will be more like a democracy than anything yet known.